

REMARKS

Claims 1-40 are being presented for examination in this application. Claims 41-952 have been cancelled above.

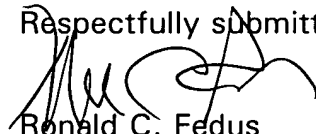
The filing of this Preliminary Amendment follows telephone conversations on July 19 and July 20, 2004 between Examiner Joyce Tung, Group Art Unit 1637, and Applicants' undersigned attorney. During those conversations, the undersigned indicated that he would file a Preliminary Amendment for the purpose of reducing the number of pending claims, thereby facilitating examination of this application.

Because a smaller number of claims are now being presented than were originally, no claim fee is believed due for this Preliminary Amendment. No other fee or fees are believed due. In the event that any other fee or fees are due, however, authorization is hereby given to charge the amount of any such fee(s) to Deposit Account No. 05-1135, or to credit any overpayment thereto.

Applicants respectfully assert that the claims are now in condition for examination.

Early action to that end is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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